

Complications Affecting Learning Listening by EFL Learners at University Level**Aeshah M. Abdulsalam***Zawia University, Faculty of Arts, English Department, Zawia, Libya**Corresponding Author Email: warmheart1975@yahoo.com*

Many studies in language learning have indicated that listening comprehension plays an important role in the learning process. In spite of its importance, listening has been ignored in second language learning, research, and teaching. The purpose of the research is to define the terms listening and listening comprehension, causes of listening difficulties, listening strategies, listening process, and elements of listening. The study took place at the Faculty of Arts, Zawia University, in the academic year 2018/2019. Questionnaire consisted closed and open-ended questions, and the main purpose in this study to investigate the difficulties in listening comprehension faced by EFL learners of the English Specialization, and the strategies used to help EFL students of the English Department at the Faculty of Arts, Zawia University. Therefore, listening comprehension can be improved by students' assistance and the use of appropriate learning materials and activities. The study revealed that several problems occurred in the teaching and learning of listening. The problems were related to listeners' performance, listening materials, students' physical limits, and supporting equipment. Based on the obtained data, the major difficulties faced by the students were related to listening materials and students' performance. Different phonological system, which dealt with the materials, and guessing unknown words seemed to affect their listening comprehension.

Keywords: Learning materials, physical limits, listening strategies, supporting equipment

1. Introduction

Listening is one of the most important skills in English language learning. When EFL students listen to the English language, they face many listening difficulties. EFL Students have basic difficulties in listening comprehension because colleges and schools pay more attention to writing, reading, and vocabulary. "Listening is not an important part of many course books and most teachers do not pay attention to this important skill in their classes" (Richards and Renandya, 2002) [1]. Though listening is a complex process that is often a confusing matter especially for L2 learners, it is the most frequent activity among learners. Ahkam (2015) expressed that the listening ability was disregarded and take a gander at a detached procedure before in language teaching. However, it gives much importance in stream language teaching approaches that listening seems to be a simple and natural task to the fact we tend to take it for granted. This simplicity of listening is questionable [2]. This research paper discusses the problems and difficulties that faced and encountered EFL students in the department of English language at the Faculty of Arts, Zawia University.

1.1. Research problem

There are many issues accompanied with listening: Listening comprehending speech is a very difficult activity for students; absence of foundation learning caused trouble in listening cognizance; listening challenge are characterized as the interior and outside variables that may interfere with content understanding and genuine handling issues specifically identified with intellectual strategies that happen at different phases of listening perceptively; and students are unable to recognize the multi-word like form /meaning of the part of speech when listening to the speaker or conversation, they often assume that each word in an utterance contributes to the meaning independently.

1.2. Research questions

- A- What are the difficulties with listening comprehension faced by EFL students of English?
- B- What strategies are used to help EFL students of the English Department in Faculty of Arts to succeed in listening comprehension?

1.3. Research Objectives

To analyze the difficulties in listening comprehension faced by EFL learners of the English Department at Faculty of Arts. To investigate the strategies used to help EFL students of the English Department to succeed in listening comprehension.

1.4. Significance of the Study

Familiarity with the components that add to the issues EFL students experience in listening comprehension would benefit the following:

A. EFL teachers should have a superior comprehension of their understudies' listening challenges and inspect their own training strategies to enhance understudies' listening comprehension. Knowing why a portion of the issues happens will normally put educators in a superior position to control their students in methods for defeating a portion of their listening troubles. It is additionally trusted that the discoveries about understudies' listening challenges can give English educators few rules for material assessment and determination

B. Learners to recognize their challenges of listening cognizance to discover what additionally realizing methodologies are essential. Students should know about the variables, which add to their challenges in tuning in; when audience members know something about their own particular

issues, they will have the capacity to enhance their listening hones and turn out to be better audience member

C. Syllabus designers and materials scholars to make advance changes in the showing materials and help understudies build up their listening comprehension skill.

D. Researchers who are occupied with classroom research to utilize the discoveries as a reason for additionally contemplate in the region.

2. Literature Review

Listening is more than simply hearing the word; is an interactive, not a passive skill, to which the students need to apply much effort and practice.

2.1. Defining Listening

O'Malley and Chamot (1989) said that listening comprehension is a functioning procedure in which the audience builds significance through utilizing prompts from logical data and from existing learning, while at the same time depending upon various key assets to play out the undertaking necessity [3]. Listening is an essential piece of the corresponding procedure and ought not to be isolated from the other dialect expressions, and is a procedure of recognizing and understanding what the speakers say, which incorporates understanding a speaker's articulation, linguistic use and vocabulary.

2.2. Elements of Listening

The two elements of listening, macro and micro skills cannot be separated. Macro skills are less demanding to comprehend since it essentially implies comprehension of what being said. However, micro skills are little more complicated to understand, as it about understanding in general, as well as we need to consider things like the decision of vocabulary, sound, state of mind, further implications and a ton more. The following are the depiction of full scale and miniaturized scale abilities that are associated with a general discussion and scholastic discourse [1, 4]. In addition, Brown (2007) proposes the micro-skills involved in understanding what someone says to us. The listener needs to: hold pieces of dialect in a fleeting memory, separate among the unmistakable sounds in the new dialect, perceive pressure and cadence designs, tone designs, intonation shapes, perceive lessened types of words, recognize word limits, perceive run of the mill word-arrange designs, perceive vocabulary, distinguish catchphrases, for example, those distinguishing points and thoughts, figure importance from setting, and identify sentence constituents, for example, subject, verb, protest, relational words, and so forth [5].

2.3. Stages of Listening

Listening exercises are generally subcategorized as pre-tuning in while tuning in, and post-listening exercises (Wilson, 2009) [6]. Pre-listening exercises, which go before the listening section, ought to set up the understudies for the cognizance undertaking by actuating understudies' vocabulary and foundation learning or by giving the understudies the data expected to comprehend the substance of the listening content, the understudies are readied what they will hear by actuating their schemata. The exercises including conceptualizing vocabulary, exploring territories of sentence structure, or talking about the theme of the listening content [6]. While-listening should enable the understudies to build up the aptitude of separating significance from the discourse stream. Understudies decipher the speakers' message, confirm and amend their forecasts. Educators may request that understudies note down catchphrases to work out the principle thought

of the content (Gilakjani, 2011). Understudies may listen a Second time, either with a specific end goal to check or to answer more inquiries. For this situation, for showing purposes, numerous chances to hear the info may diminish understudies' nervousness. It implies that they can tune in to the section thought about troublesome. There are various different variables concerning the entry that become possibly the most important factor: trouble, length, the academic concentration and the potential for weariness [7].

2.4. Factors Make Listening Difficult

Kurita, (2012) notices that the issue on listening was going with the four factors after variables: the message, the speaker, the audience and the physical setting. Besides, a quantity of research has been led to choose the issue in tuning in. The issues were accepted to cause by the discourse rate vocabulary and elocution identified with the troubles of listening exhibitions, the accompanying eight attributes should be viewed by (Kurita, 2012) [8]:

1. Clustering: led autonomous examination outside the class. A large portion of them lean toward tuning in to English melodies and watching English motion pictures. Some wanted to tune in to news and viewing YouTube recordings.
2. Redundancy: perceiving the sorts of redundancies rethinking, elaborations, and additions that unrehearsed talked dialect frequently contains, and profiting by that acknowledgment.
3. Reduced structures: understanding the decreased structures that might not have been a piece of an English student's past learning encounters in classes where just formal "course reading" dialect has been exhibited.
4. Performance factors: having the capacity to "weed out" dithering's, false begins, stops, and remedies in normal discourse.
5. Colloquial dialect: grasping figures of speech, slang, lessened structures, shared social learning.
6. Rate of conveyance: staying aware of the speed of conveyance, handling naturally as the speaker proceeds.
7. Stress, cadence, and pitch: accurately understanding prosodic components of talked dialect, which is considerably more troublesome than understanding the littler phonological odds and ends.
8. Interaction: dealing with the intelligent stream of dialect from tuning in to addressing tuning in, and so on.

3. Methodology

The researcher used qualitative research design. Latief (2012) explains that qualitative research is concerned with developing explanations of social phenomena. This was due to the nature of the problem under investigation in the study [9].

3.1. Participants

To accomplish the point set of the study, a sample of thirty-nine students registered in the class of second-semester of English at Faculty of Arts for the academic year 2018/2019 used to serve as respondent in this research. According to Cohen *et al.* (2007) claim that random sampling involves "choosing the nearest individuals to serve as respondents and continuing that process until the required sample size has been obtained or those who happen to be available and accessible at the time" (P.47) [10].

3.2. Research Instrument

Questionnaire contained of closed question items. The idea behind it is that it is easier to gather and analyze and the responses to the later will provide more flexibility so that respondent can give more accurate answer. The questions were about problems involve the students' performance, listening materials, students' physical limits, and supporting equipment. Related to students' learning strategy, seven questions were proposed. They were in the form of close and question items.

3.3. Data Collection Procedure

Different procedures were followed using different instrument. The process of implementing the methods took Two months.

3.3.1 Piloting

Before implementing the research methods, questionnaire was given to some participants. In order to check my mistakes and the samples' comments were taken in a consideration; the questions of the questionnaire were modified according to the comments; the modifications based on syntactical and semantic approaches.

3.3.2 Administration of the Students' questionnaire

Firstly, the researcher handed the questionnaire to thirty-nine students at a specific time in a regular week of their class's. Then; the researcher kindly asked the participants to answer the whole questionnaire and announced students that they are not in the position of testing. Instead, it is just volunteering. Thirdly, the answered questionnaires were returned back to the researcher at the same day; the duration of the answering the questionnaire took Twenty minutes.

4. Results of the study

The findings of the study were presented based on students' questionnaires. This step illustrates the description of students' problems and strategies they used to overcome those problems.

4.1 Results of the questionnaire

Results of students' Problems Related to Performance; results of students' Problems Related to Listening Materials; results of problems related to students' physical problems and limits; and results of problems Related to Supporting Equipment ([Table 1](#)).

Table 1: Students' Problems Related to Performance

| No | Problem | Never | Sometimes | Often | Always |
|----|------------------------------|--------|-----------|--------|--------|
| 1 | Making prediction | 17.95% | %43.59 | %17.95 | %20.51 |
| | | 07 | 17 | 07 | 08 |
| 2 | Guessing unknown words | %10.26 | %35.89 | %30.77 | %23.08 |
| | | 04 | 14 | 12 | 09 |
| 3 | Unfamiliar topics | %30.76 | %33.34 | %23.07 | %12.83 |
| | | 12 | 13 | 09 | 05 |
| 4 | Lacking background knowledge | %28.21 | %28.21 | %33.33 | %10.25 |
| | | 11 | 11 | 13 | 04 |
| 5 | Recognizing main points | %10.25 | %35.89 | %23.07 | 30.79% |
| | | 04 | 14 | 09 | 12 |

The result indicated that in general, students found meaningful obstacles in terms of their learning style. Few of them can predict unknown words that less familiar to them. Concerning with prior knowledge, they have enough knowledge that can maintain their listening comprehension. Another reason was that some of them cannot recognizing main points of the listening (Table 2).

Table 2: Students' Problems Related to Listening Materials

| No | Statement | Never | Sometimes | Often | Always |
|----|----------------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1 | Different phonetic systems | 25.65% 10 | 48.71% 19 | 20.52% 08 | 5.12% 02 |
| 2 | Speed of speech | % 23.08 09 | 35.89% 14 | 15.39% 06 | 25.64% 10 |
| 3 | Linking words | 33.34% 13 | %15.39 06 | %10.25 04 | %41.02 16 |
| 4 | Authentic materials | 15.38% 06 | %%33.34 13 | %35.90 14 | %15.38 06 |
| 5 | Ungrammatical sentences | %17.95 07 | 17.95% 07 | 43.58% 17 | 20.52% 08 |
| 6 | Different accent | 25.65% 10 | 41.03% 16 | 17.94% 07 | 15.38% 06 |
| 7 | Colloquial words | 17.94% 07 | 41.03% 16 | 23.08% 09 | 17.95% 07 |
| 8 | Long listening text | 15.38% 06 | 41.03% 16 | %23.08 09 | %20.51 08 |

The result indicated that in general, students found meaningful obstacles in terms of their learning style. Few of them can predict unknown words that less familiar to them. Concerning with prior knowledge, they have enough knowledge that can maintain their listening comprehension. Another reason was that some of them could not recognize main points of the listening (Table 3).

Table 3: Problems related to students' physical problems and limits

| No | Statements | Never | Sometimes | Often | Always |
|----|------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1 | Fatigue | 38.47% 15 | 43.59% 17 | 7.69% 03 | 10.25% 04 |
| 2 | Hesitation | 23.08% 09 | 48.72% 19 | 12.82% 05 | 15.38% 06 |

The problems with listening comprehension might be caused by student's physical limits, fatigue and hesitation for example. However, the result of the study reported that these factors. However, the result of the study reported that these factors did not significantly affect the students' listening ability (Table 4).

Table 4: Problems Related to Supporting Equipment

| No | Statements | Never | Sometimes | Often | Always |
|----|-------------------|--------|-----------|--------|--------|
| 1 | Noises | 35.90% | 25.65% | 20.51% | 17.94% |
| | | 14 | 10 | 08 | 07 |
| 2 | Poor tape quality | 28.21% | 30.76% | 33.34% | 7.69% |
| | | 11 | 12 | 13 | 03 |
| 3 | Poor equipment | 12.82% | 38.47% | 41.02% | 7.69% |
| | | 05 | 15 | 16 | 03 |

The last problems derived from equipment that support the activity of listening comprehension. The problems in equipment related to noises, poor tape quality, and poor equipment. Nonetheless, based on the study, these factors did not contribute that (61.53%, 58.97%, 51.29%) did not recognize any trouble in terms of noises, poor tape quality, and poor equipment correspondingly.

5. Conclusions

The results of the investigation indicated that several problems occurred in the teaching and learning of listening. The problems were related to listeners' performance, listening materials, students' physical limits, and supporting equipment. Based on the data obtained, the major problem faced by the students were related to listening materials and students' performance. Different phonological system, which dealt with the materials, and guessing unknown words seemed to affect their listening comprehension. The study found that understudies associated a couple of frameworks to develop their listening mastery. Most of them (94.88%) conducted an independent study outside the class. Most of them prefer listening to English songs, watching English movies. Some loved to listen to news and chatting with native speakers or watching YouTube videos.

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